

FLORIDA

Vegetable Report

ACREAGE-FALL QUARTER (Oct. Nov. Dec.)

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Benjamin F. Klugh, Jr.
Director
407/648-6013

FLORIDA WEATHER: Hot temperatures during July, August and September boosted plant growth and fruit development. In early July, rain and wind, caused by Tropical Storm Cindy passing off the eastern coast and Hurricane Dennis churning in the Gulf of Mexico, delayed some land preparation for fall crop planting. Clearer weather, between sporadic showers, during the rest of July and most of August let producers keep most field preparation and planting on schedule. In late July, muddy fields prevented some field preparations around Immokalee. By mid-to-late August, squash and watermelon planting was active around Lake Placid while eggplant, pepper and tomato planting was underway in the Immokalee area. Dade County crops suffered significant damage as Katrina passed over on August 25 with flooding hampering okra harvesting. Some Dade County growers cut as much okra as possible before the storm arrived. Rain and wind beat tomato plants in the Quincy area, resulting in some yield loss. Elsewhere, over the southern Peninsula, a few producers delayed some planting due to the threat of damage from Katrina. However, the Immokalee and Palmetto-Ruskin regions suffered no significant harm. Tomato acreage in the Quincy area was virtually all planted by the third week of August with some late plantings making harvest run a little later than usual. In early September, some planting and other field work was postponed around Hastings, Stuart and Jupiter due to the threat of Tropical Storm Ophelia. Drier conditions around mid-September speeded the laying of plastic and planting in all major regions, and allowed the tomato crop around Quincy to improve from previous storm damage. In late September, strong, gusty winds from Hurricane Rita blew plastic off some Dade County fields which delayed planting by about half a week. About one percent of the winter tomato acreage was transplanted around Homestead when Rita passed. Less rainfall from Rita around Immokalee, Plant City, Palmetto and Ruskin allowed planting to remain mostly on schedule. Heavier rainfall around Quincy interrupted some tomato pruning and tying as the picking of grape types got underway. By early October, strawberry growers around Plant City were preparing ground and laying plastic for winter crop transplanting and producers around Hastings started planting cabbage.

SNAP BEANS: As of October 1, acreage to be picked was set at 10,000 acres, up 200 acres from the 9,800 acres harvested during the fall of 2004. Plantings for the fall crop were delayed due to rain and gusty winds caused by tropical systems with the fields extremely saturated. Very light amounts were available as harvesting began in late September and early October.

CABBAGE: Planting started during late September in the Hastings area with some planting delayed due to rainfall from Tropical Storm Ophelia. As of October 1, producers hoped to pick 1,100 acres, up 100 acres from last year. Harvesting around Hastings was expected to begin about December 1.

SWEET CORN: Surplus soil moisture supplies delayed some planting around Lake Okeechobee and in Dade County. Growers expected to pick 5,300 acres this fall, up 500 acres or 10 percent from the last fall's acreage. Picking began in late September.

CUCUMBERS: As of October 1, growers expected to pick 4,300 acres compared to 4,600 acres harvested a year ago. Harvesting started in late September with very light amounts available by early October.

BELL PEPPERS: Producers expect to pick 4,800 acres this fall, down 100 acres from the 4,900 acres harvested last fall. Some plantings were delayed due to prior tropical systems with fields extremely saturated. Harvesting got underway in late September.

TOMATOES: Abundant rainfall over the Quincy area slowed planting in July with the start of harvest delayed by one to two weeks. Limited planting began in southern Hillsborough County around mid-August. Acreage in the Quincy area was virtually all planted by the third week of August with some late plantings making harvest continue for a longer time than usual. By early September, acreage in the Quincy area was in good condition as cooler temperatures slowed some growth. Picking the Palmetto-Ruskin region and around Quincy started in late September and early October. As of October 1, growers were expected to pick 12,000 acres, equal to last fall's acreage.

UNITED STATES

GENERAL: The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the fall quarter was forecast at 163,900 acres, up 3 percent from last year. Acreage increased for snap beans, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, sweet corn, and bell peppers while acreage decreased for celery, cucumbers, head lettuce, and tomatoes. Acreage for cabbage was unchanged. Area forecasted for fall melon harvest was 15,800 acres, up 35 percent from last year. Cantaloupe harvested area was forecast at 12,300 acres, up 45 percent from 2004. Honeydew harvested area was forecast at 3,500 acres, up 9 percent from last fall.

SNAP BEANS: Fall fresh market area for harvest was forecast at 18,800 acres, up 4 percent from last year and 11 percent above 2003. Georgia growers reported a very dry fall season with very little rainfall received during the last month. The New Jersey crop did well despite sustained high temperatures during the summer months. Regular irrigation was necessary for most of the fields. In Virginia, persistent dry weather and warmer than normal temperatures made irrigation necessary in some areas. Growers that could not irrigate expected lower yields.

CABBAGE: Fresh market area for harvest was forecast at 6,500 acres, unchanged from both last year and the year before. Conditions were dry in Georgia during September. New Jersey acreage was unchanged from last year. Harvest began mid-September with good quality reported. Texas conditions were abnormally hot with mid-afternoon temperatures in the high 90s. This year's crop experienced problems similar to white fly infestation.

SWEET CORN: Fresh market area for harvest was forecast at 10,100 acres, up 4 percent from last year and 2 percent above 2003. California's crop was in good condition as of October 1 with no insect or disease problems reported.

CUCUMBERS: Area for fall harvest was forecast at 7,200 acres, down 6 percent from last year and 9 percent lower than 2003. South Carolina's crop received sufficient moisture until hurricane season which disrupted the normal West-East weather fronts. Precipitation was well below normal with the exception of coastal areas from Charleston north that received rainfall from Hurricane Ophelia. The Texas crop had some white fly damage with most acreage doing well by October 1. Virginia growers reported hot and dry conditions this fall. Irrigated cucumbers were doing well but growers without irrigation expected lower yields and quality.

BELL PEPPERS: Fall area for harvest was forecast at 5,400 acres, up 6 percent from both 2004 and 2003. In Texas, fields made good progress but hot weather delayed fruit set. The market was strong but there were no peppers ready for harvest by October 1. A late harvest was expected.

TOMATOES: Fresh market area for fall harvest was forecast at 21,400 acres, 1 percent below last year and down 4 percent from 2003. California growers reported normal conditions during planting. Harvest was active and fungicides were being applied as needed.

Vegetables for fresh market, prospective acreage for harvest, October, November and December, by States, 2005 with comparisons					
Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Fall acreage			2005 area for harvest as percent of 2004
		Harvested		For harvest 2005	
		2003	2004		
		Acres		Percent	
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Oct-Dec	9,200	9,800	10,000	102
Georgia	Oct-Dec	5,000	5,000	5,000	100
New Jersey	Sep-Oct	900	1,600	1,700	106
Virginia	Sep-Oct	1,900	1,600	2,100	131
Total		17,000	18,000	18,800	104
CABBAGE:					
Florida ^{1/}	Oct-Dec	500	1,000	1,100	110
Georgia	Oct-Dec	4,700	4,800	4,700	98
New Jersey	Sep-Nov	400	500	500	100
Texas	Sep-Nov	900	200	200	100
Total		6,500	6,500	6,500	100
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Oct-Dec	4,900	4,800	5,300	110
California	Oct-Dec	5,000	4,900	4,800	98
Total		9,900	9,700	10,100	104
CUCUMBERS:					
Florida	Oct-Dec	4,800	4,600	4,300	93
South Carolina	Oct-Dec	700	1,000	700	70
Texas	Sep-Nov	1,100	1,200	1,500	125
Virginia	Sep-Oct	1,300	900	700	78
Total		7,900	7,700	7,200	94
BELL PEPPERS: ^{2/}					
Florida	Oct-Dec	4,900	4,900	4,800	98
Texas	Sep-Nov	200	200	600	300
Total		5,100	5,100	5,400	106
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Sep-Dec	13,500	12,000	12,000	100
California	Oct-Dec	8,800	9,600	9,400	98
Total		22,300	21,600	21,400	99
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		37,800	37,100	37,500	101
United States		68,700	68,600	69,400	101
TOTAL OF CROPS ESTIMATED					
United States ^{3/}		171,000	171,300	179,700	105

^{1/} 2004 revised.
^{2/} Includes fresh market and processing.
^{3/} Total of crops listed plus broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, head lettuce, cantaloupes, and honeydew melons.